

# **Dumfries & Galloway Council**

## **Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2023-2028**



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## 1. Executive Summary

The Dumfries & Galloway Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2023-2028 (RRTP 23-28) was developed with Partners and sets out the context and workplan for achieving the objectives set out in the Housing Options and Homeless Strategy 2023-2028.

This plan builds on the work undertaken through the RRTP 2019-2024, the adapted working practices implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent Cost of Living crisis. It recognises the significant impact on homelessness services as a result of this and sets out the workplan for fully embedding a 'Rapid Rehousing' approach over the next five years.

There is a clear link between the outcomes set out within the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2023-2028 and the following outcomes in the national Scottish Housing Charter 2017:

- **Outcome 7** that requires social landlords to work together to ensure that *“people looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decision about the range of housing options available to them.”*
- **Outcome 8** social landlords ensure that tenants and people on waiting lists can review their housing options.
- **Outcome 9** social landlords ensure that people at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.
- **Outcome 12** that requires local authorities to perform their duties on homelessness so that: homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice; are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed; and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.

In 2019 the Scottish Housing Regulator introduced the requirement on all Scottish Local Authorities to submit an Annual Assurance Statement. This is agreed by Elected Members each year and provides an opportunity to scrutinise the work of the Housing Options and Homeless service. The service also provides regular update reports to the Communities Committee and quarterly reports to the Dumfries & Galloway Strategic Homeless Forum.

The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan contributes to the Council's Principle to “Support our citizens” and to Outcome 4 of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-2027 “there is affordable and warm housing for all”.

This Plan is designed to be a working document which:

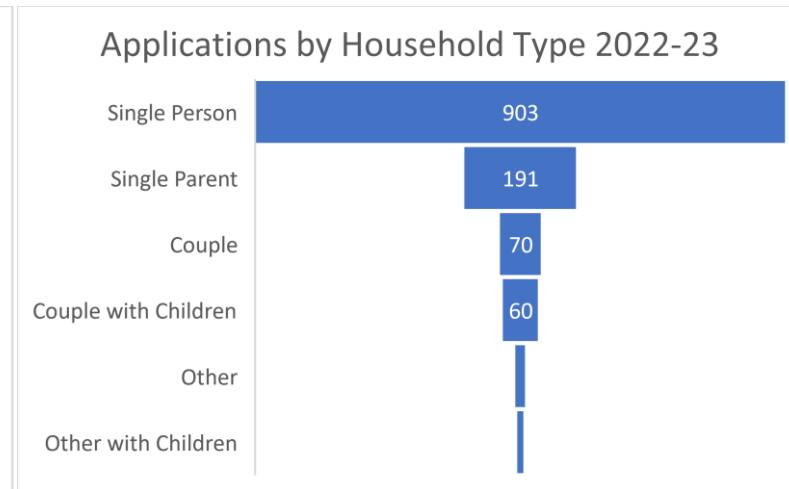
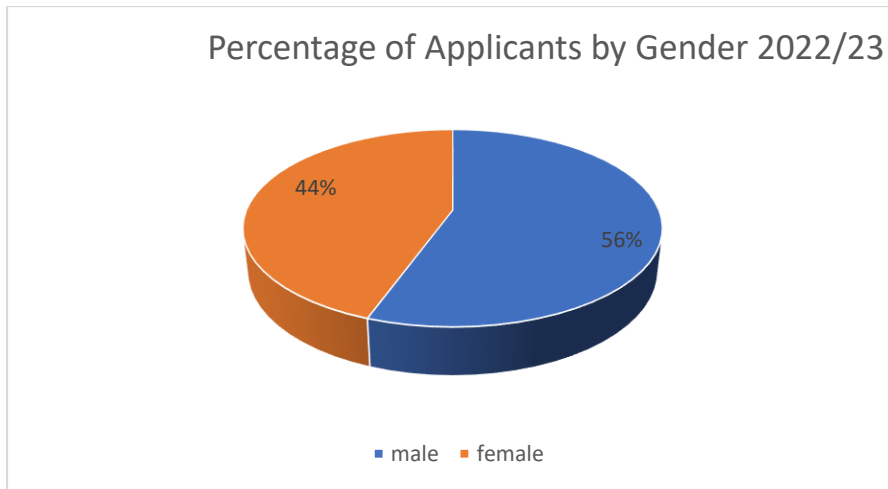
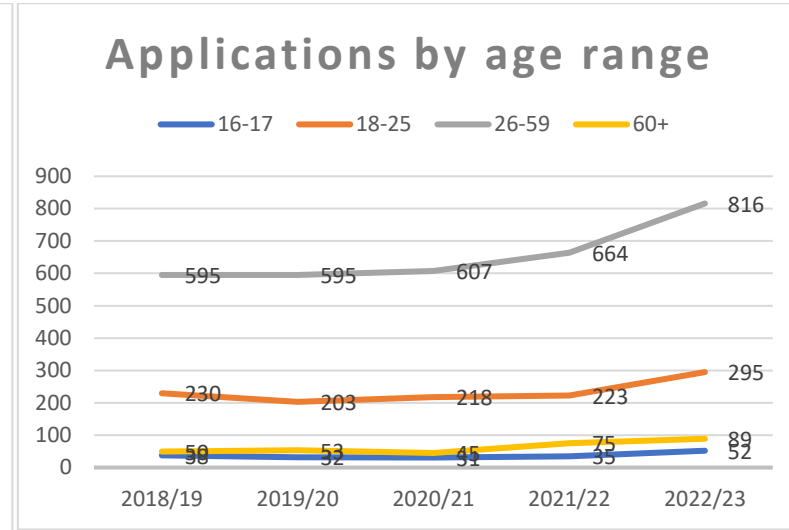
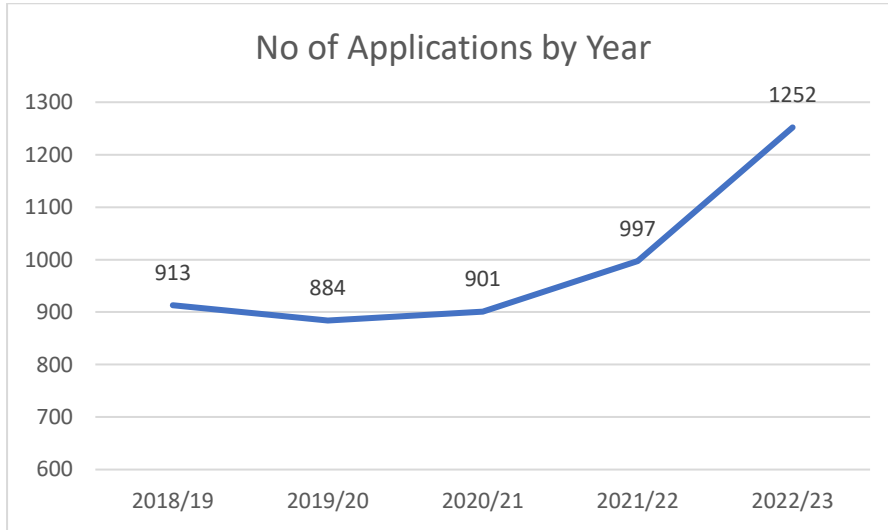
- Sets out the local housing market and homelessness context within Dumfries and Galloway;
- Provides baseline and trend information on the current homeless position and temporary accommodation usage across the Region;
- Identifies support requirements needed to enable a successful transition to rapid rehousing;

- Details the actions required to achieve the vision for temporary accommodation supply and settled housing options for households experiencing homelessness as set out in the Housing Options and Homeless Strategy 2023-2028.

## 2. National Policy and Legislative Context

- 2.1. The **Housing (Scotland) Act 2001** placed a statutory duty on local authorities to assess the extent of homelessness in the area and prepare a strategy for the prevention and alleviation of homelessness. Following Scottish Government guidance issued in 2008, these duties were to be incorporated as part of the Local Housing Strategy.
- 2.2. The **Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003** amended the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 to abolish the ‘priority need’ test in assessing homelessness duty, which in a subsequent determination by Scottish Ministers was to be achieved by 31 December 2012. This change significantly increased the rights of single people who experience homelessness, including access to temporary and settled accommodation.
- 2.3. **In November 2022 the Homelessness Persons (Suspension of Referrals between Local Authorities) (Scotland) Order 2022** came into force suspending the requirement for homeless applicants to demonstrate their local connection to the area where they are presenting as homeless.
- 2.4. **The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014** specified that local authorities may not provide a household with children or pregnant women in temporary accommodation which is unsuitable (as defined in the Order) , unless exceptional circumstances apply. The 2014 specified that where a local authority provides a household which does not meet the requirements set out in Article 5 this must be for no longer than 14 days. The Order was amended in 2017 to reduce this to 7 days. In 2020 the Order was extended to include all homeless households.
- 2.5. The **Housing (Scotland) Act 2010** introduced a requirement for local authorities to undertake a support needs assessment for all households found to be both unintentionally homeless and where there is reason to believe the household may have housing support needs.
- 2.6. The **Scottish Social Housing Charter 2017** aims to improve the quality and value of services provided by registered social landlords (RSL’s) and support the Scottish Governments aim to create a safer stronger Scotland.
- 2.7. **Ending Homelessness Together** – the Scottish Government’s high level action plan for ending Homelessness in Scotland was published in November 2019 and revised in October 2020. This plan sets the direction for real and lasting change towards ending Homelessness in Scotland and recognises that in addition to homelessness and housing services, we need partners across services including health, social work, community support and justice and the third sector to recognise and act when people they work with are at risk of homelessness to ensure a joint approach to ending homelessness.

### 3. Homelessness in Dumfries & Galloway 2022/23



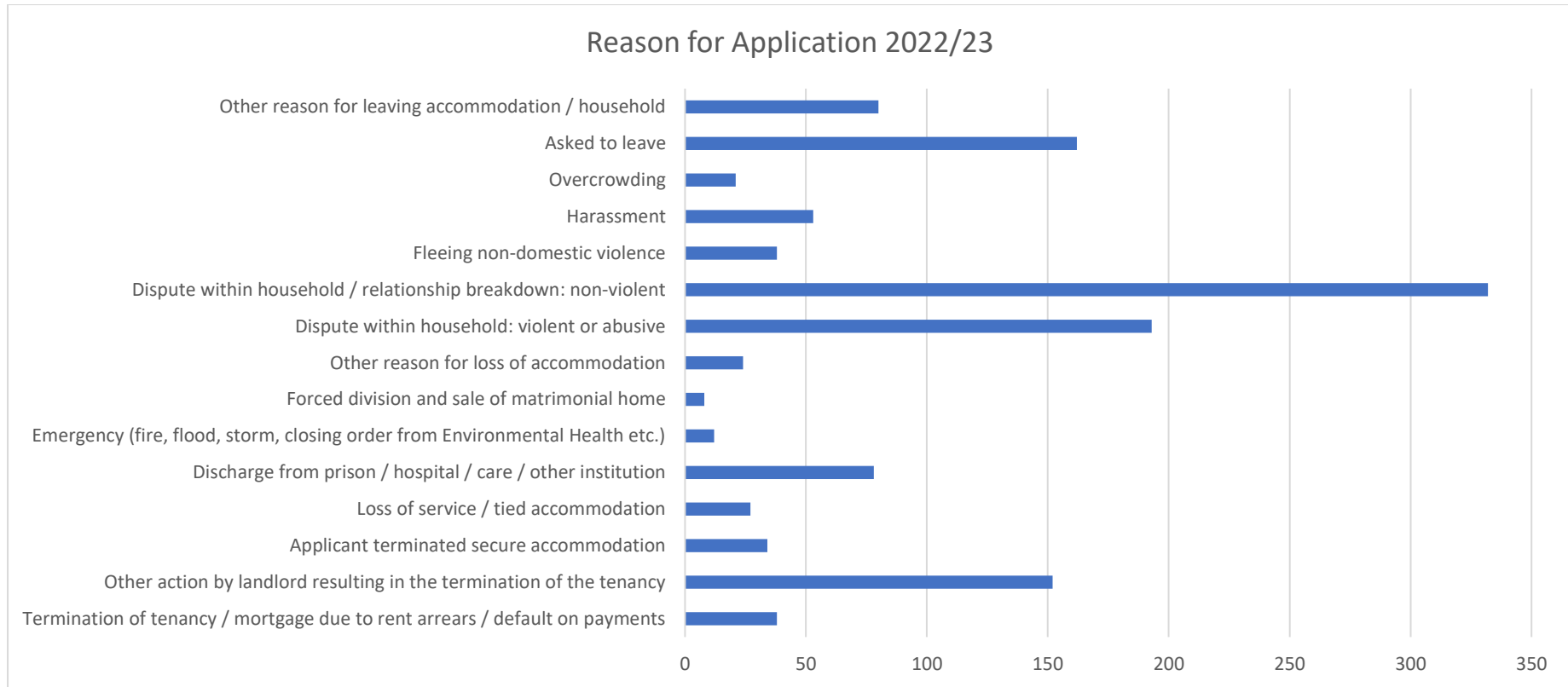


Table 1 Temporary Accommodation

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Length of Stay(days)	83.1	76.4	109.30	98.4	83.7*
Void Percentage (furnished properties only)	29%	28%	28%	20%	14%
Temporary Accommodation Units of available accommodation	271	244	273	257	278

\*Based on each individual temporary accommodation placement

## 4. Theme 1 Homelessness Prevention

- 4.1. Each local authority has a statutory duty under section 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to provide advice about homelessness or preventing homelessness, and to sign post people to services that may assist with the prevention of Homelessness.
- 4.2. Partnership working is a significant factor in both prevention and outcomes for clients. Homelessness is often a symptom of health or social care issues and therefore a sustainable and longer-term solution will require partners from Health & Social Care, Employability, Housing Support, Education, Third Sector and Landlords (both RSL and Private) to work together on a prevention agenda. The Dumfries & Galloway Strategic Homeless Forum continues to meet quarterly to look at cross sector strategic issues.
- 4.3. Legislation will be tabled by the Scottish Parliament during the lifetime of this strategy to extend the duty to prevent homelessness across the public sector. The work of the Strategic Homeless Forum will take cognisance of that and will continue to review and develop cross sector working practices to highlight the importance of homelessness prevention.
- 4.4. The Scottish Government's Prevent 1 statutory return allows them to monitor the effectiveness of homeless prevention activity across Scotland. Whilst households may self-refer for housing options advice and assistance, there is also a legal requirement on all landlords and mortgage lenders to notify the local authority if they are taking action to evict a householder. Where notification is received, the householder will be contacted to assist them to take steps to remain in their current accommodation. The Scottish Government have continued a moratorium on evictions until September 2023 as part of their post pandemic recovery plans. It is not confirmed whether this will be extended beyond the end of September 2023. This action is currently moderating the numbers of eviction/repossession notification being received at this time, but it is expected there could be a considerable upturn in numbers when this measure ends. The table below details the number of approaches recorded in PREVENT 1 for Dumfries & Galloway for the past 4 years. 10% of PREVENT 1 approaches in 22/23 resulted in a homeless application being taken.

Table 2 PREVENT 1 Approaches

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	22/23
PREVENT1 Approaches	365	343	648	385
Eviction/Repossession Notifications and Abandonments	Not available	123	102	144
		36%	16%	37%

- 4.5. In response to increased homeless presentations and the increasing number of households who are now threatened with homelessness due to the current Cost of Living crisis, resourcing within the Housing Options and Homeless Service will be realigned to focus on homelessness prevention and further development of partnership working to strengthen early intervention.

- 4.6. The Welfare and Housing Options Support Team located alongside the Housing Options and Homeless Team, has been developed in partnership with the Revenues and Benefit Service to provide additional support. This team works towards tenancy sustainment and eviction prevention by resolving any issues with benefits, linking with/providing housing options advice, liaising with Landlords, budget planning and support with applications to other DWP benefits or the Scottish Welfare Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments. During 2022-23 the team supported 488 households providing in excess of £191K of 1 off/back dated payments of which £81K were homeless prevention discretionary housing payments. This resulted in 205 saved potential evictions.
- 4.7. The Housing Options Training Toolkit is a standalone training resource owned by the 32 Scottish Local Authorities, Wheatley Homes Glasgow and funded by the Scottish Government via the 5 area-based Housing Options Hubs. It consists of 6 modules each covering a different area of housing options practice and aims to provide a comprehensive training resource for housing options service delivery that can be used by all housing professionals. The toolkit will be used to train staff within the Housing Options and Homeless Service over the next 12 months and will be promoted to partner services, housing associations and the third sector during the lifetime of the Housing Options and Homeless Strategy.
- 4.8. A number of homelessness prevention pathways have been developed during the life-time of the RRTP 2018-2024. These include:
- A hospital discharge protocol to ensure those who are threatened with homelessness on leaving hospital are identified early and work is begun to address their potential homelessness prior to discharge.
  - A prison discharge protocol allowing early identification of prisoners who may be suitable for discharge straight into a permanent housing solution rather than coming down the homeless route.
  - A pathway and protocol for those experiencing domestic violence and/or coercive control which has been developed in partnership with the Domestic Abuse and Violence against Women's Group.
  - A multi-agency Pathway and Protocol for Young People ensuring a holistic approach to homelessness prevention for under 26 age group including identified pathways for young people still in education and those who are care experienced.
- 4.9. During the period of the previous RRTP, we were unsuccessful in commissioning a standalone mediation service focusing on family relationships and maintaining young people at home where the young person is not in danger from harm. However, in one of the Housing Support providers who deliver services to young people have in partnership with Social Work Services developed a counselling service which is has been successful. Feedback from staff and stakeholders have continued to identify a potential need for mediation services therefore this will be explored further.
- 4.10. There is a need to ensure prevention information and the service are fully accessible to minority groups including those from ethnic minorities and those from the LGBTQ+ community. We will work with community organisations to ensure the service is available to all.
- 4.11. A Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme assisting households to secure tenancies in the private sector is operated on the Council's behalf by third-sector organisation The HUB.



**THEME 1: HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION****Actions**

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Action Point 1.1</b> | Ensure appropriate training and support is in place for all staff and shared with partners and community organisations where applicable.  |
| <b>Action Point 1.2</b> | Review the delivery model of Housing Options and explore the use of other services to ensure homelessness prevention is a key priority across all partners.                       |
| <b>Action Point 1.3</b> | Continue the development of pathway models for specific user groups and review pathways in place on a regular basis and/or in line with any legislative or regulatory changes.    |
| <b>Action Point 1.4</b> | Work in partnership to develop policies and processes in line with Scottish Government proposals to expand the legislative duty to prevent homelessness across the public sector. |
| <b>Action Point 1.5</b> | Build awareness of prevention activities and pathways across all front-line staff within partnership organisations  |

## 5. Theme 2 Communication and Service Improvements

- 5.1. The Scottish Government's Ending homelessness together: updated action plan published in October 2020 recognises the shared ambition of national and local government to end homelessness in Scotland and states that "everyone should have a home that meets their needs" it further states "to end homelessness, we will:
  - Embed a person-centred approach;
  - Prevent homelessness from happening in the first place;
  - Join up planning and resources to tackle homelessness;
  - Respond quickly and effectively whenever homelessness happens, and
  - Prioritise settled homes for all.
- 5.2. Dumfries & Galloway is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest geographical region in Scotland and one of the most rural. The Housing Options and Homeless Service's commitment is "to ensure clients have equal and open access to the service across the Region". The Service operates from 4 Offices across the region: Dumfries, Annan, Stranraer and Kirkcudbright offering face to face appointments, telephone advice and assistance.
- 5.3. The majority of contact and information channels are currently within the standard office hours. All offices have access to private interview facilities and have arrangements to assist those with sight, hearing or speech difficulties. The service uses the Council's translation services for those clients whose first language is not English.
- 5.4. The Council's Social Work Services Out of Hours Service provides advice and access to emergency accommodation out with office hours.
- 5.5. The Council's website and the Housing Options Web-based portal provide information and advice for everyone looking for information around their housing or homelessness situation. The information on these is reviewed and updated regularly.
- 5.6. 75% of initial contacts were seen within the agreed timescales for appointment times in 2022/23 with a further 8% offered appointments outside the expected timescales at their request.
- 5.7. The number of out of hours contacts has steadily increased over the past 5 years with 220 enquiries to the service in 22/23 compared with 57 in 2017/18 an increase of almost 400%. Of the 220 enquiries, 186 required out of hours accommodation. There are two out of hours flats in the region (Dumfries & Stranraer) which have received excellent feedback from service users. These do not meet the current demand requirements and the service is making use of bed and breakfast and hotel accommodation to ensure households have access to emergency accommodation. A further review of out of hours provision will take place in Year 1 of this plan.
- 5.8. Feedback from Service Users, Staff and Stakeholders indicate a number of areas for improvement including developing the use of technology both to promote and provide access to the service and to streamline processes (E.g. removing the need of paper-based forms), increasing the use of social media to promote housing options and working with other service to improve the knowledge of front-line staff around housing options and where to go for help. Promotion of Housing Options in this way will encourage people to access assistance and advice at an earlier stage and assist with homelessness prevention.

**THEME 2: COMMUNICATION AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS****Actions**

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Action Point 2.1</b> | Review and update contact methods including Housing Options self-service portal, phone interviews, and home visits for service users.   |
| <b>Action Point 2.2</b> | Review Out of Hours accommodation requirements in line with demand.   |
| <b>Action Point 2.3</b> | Review and update internal procedures and processes to ensure efficient, consistent service provision.  |
| <b>Action Point 2.4</b> | Review the use of IT and other technology to increase the mobility of staff, increase efficiency and reduce the number of manual and duplicate processes and ensure assessment, application and appeals processing targets are being met. |
| <b>Action Point 2.5</b> | Develop a Customer and Stakeholder Engagement Policy to ensure the service communicates in an open and clear manner, is interactive and inclusive and uses outcomes from engagement activities to shape service delivery                  |

## 6. Theme 3 Temporary Accommodation

- 6.1. As a stock transfer authority Dumfries & Galloway Council does not own any housing stock and procures accommodation from several sources including refuge accommodation, self-contained accommodation within the social rented and private sectors and accommodation with housing support. The service also provides emergency accommodation for those presenting as homeless outside of normal office hours.
- 6.2. The ongoing need to maintain the level of stock within the Temporary Accommodation portfolio to meet current demand is contrary to the objectives set out in the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2018- 2023 and presents increased financial pressures for the service. The number of units of Temporary Accommodation as at 31st March 2023 is as follows:
  - Leased from Registered Social Landlords:147
  - Leased from Private Sector Landlords:51
  - Local Authority Hostel, managed by a third party – 1 with 7 spaces (4 spaces utilised currently due to requirement to upgrade all rooms to en-suite)
  - Accommodation with support procured from Housing Support funding – 38
  - Refuge Accommodation procured from Housing Support funding - 28

This is currently supplemented by the use of bed and breakfast accommodation across the region with 24 households residing in this type of accommodation on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

- 6.3. During 22/23 the high level of demand for temporary accommodation has resulted in 226 household placements in bed and breakfast/hotel accommodation and 47 breaches of the unsuitable accommodation order under the Homelessness (Scotland) Act. This trend is continuing in the current financial year with 31 placements into hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation in April 2023 and 28 breaches of the unsuitable accommodation order.
- 6.4. A significant portion of the costs of providing temporary accommodation is met through Housing Benefit and associated subsidy arrangements. However, any changes to welfare benefits can impact on these costs.
- 6.5. We are committed to provide good quality, affordable accommodation for clients to ensure they are treated with dignity and respect. Allocation of temporary accommodation will meet the health and safety needs of clients. The Temporary Accommodation Portfolio and Policy will be reviewed on an bi-annual basis to ensure we are able to provide temporary accommodation that meets the individual needs of clients including those who have mobility, disability or religious requirements.
- 6.6. As indicated below, current pressures resulting from the effects from the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent cost of living crisis, has resulted in the service not being able to reduce the levels of Temporary Accommodation. The numbers have increased back to year 1 of the D&G Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (18/19) levels. A key component of this five year plan will be to reduce time spent in temporary accommodation by working in partnership to rehome households as quickly as possible and reduce the levels of temporary accommodation in line with a rapid

rehousing approach. During Year 1 of this plan we will work towards reducing the use of bed and breakfast/hotel accommodation for temporary accommodation and preventing breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order.

- 6.7. Within the HL1 data the average length of stay based on each individual temporary accommodation placement is reported. In 2022/23 this figure stands at 84 days, however when looking at the overall number of days within temporary accommodation (i.e. when a household has had more than one placement e.g. B&B followed by a move to furnished accommodation) the true average per household for 2022/23 is 117 days.

Table 3 Temporary Accommodation

	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Total no of placements	721	766	650	653	847
Length of Stay	83.1 days	76.4	109.30	98.4	84
Void Percentage (furnished properties)	29%	28%	28%	20%	14%
Temporary Accommodation Portfolio	271 units	244 units	273 units	257 units	271 units
Placements into B&B/Hotel Accommodation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	226
Number of Unsuitable Accommodation Breaches	0	0	0	0	47

### Housing with Support

- 6.8. The increase in support needs for clients over the past four years and client feedback indicates that time spent in certain types of accommodation is beneficial in assisting them to move to and sustain permanent accommodation.
- 6.9. The 'Shared Spaces' Policy Paper sets out the Scottish Government's vision for supported housing and advocates a health lead approach for those clients where a mainstream tenancy is not suitable or desirable. The H&SC Partnership's Housing with Care & Support Strategy sets out the requirements for supported accommodation.
- 6.10. There are 45 units of temporary accommodation offering Housing with low level Housing Support available within Dumfries, Stranraer and Annan. The Annan service is currently designated for young people under the age of 26 but the Service recognises the need for this type of accommodation for young people within Dumfries as a priority action. We will work with partners to develop and deliver a housing with support model which meets the needs of clients and is sustainable for medium to longer term.

## Domestic Abuse

- 6.11. Safe Accommodation with support for women and children fleeing domestic abuse is provided by Dumfries & Stewarty Women's Aid and Wigtownshire Women's Aid.
- 6.12. Services for women and children fleeing domestic abuse and/or coercive control are jointly commissioned with partners in NHS Dumfries & Galloway and the Health & Social Care Partnership.
- 6.13. The services will be reviewed and re-commissioned during the period of this strategy to take into account the change levels of demand and to ensure that services meet the requirements for all those fleeing abuse including women, men, children and those from the LBQT+ community.

### THEME 3: TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

**Theme 3 Outcome:** Provide good quality affordable temporary accommodation

#### Actions

- Action Point 3.1** Continue to revise the Temporary Accommodation requirements in line with demand, changing demographics, legal requirements and housing needs of specific client groups.
- Action Point 3.2** Work with partners to develop working practices to reduce the length of time spent in Temporary Accommodation and reduce the number of temporary accommodation units and remove the use of bed and breakfast accommodation in line with a Rapid Rehousing approach.
- Action Point 3.3** Review the requirements for Housing with Support and develop a housing with support model which meets the needs of clients in the medium to long term.

## 7. Theme 4 Support

- 7.1. **Homelessness and Health** – Homelessness is a public health issue. The Scottish Public Health Network Report, ‘Restoring the Public Health response to Homelessness in Scotland’ (May 2015) concluded ‘homelessness is both a consequence and a cause of poverty, social and health inequality’. The relationship between poor health (physical, mental or both) and homelessness is recognised as two-way, being both a significant contributory factor which can lead to a person becoming homeless, but is also in many cases, a ‘late marker’ of severe and complex disadvantage”.
- 7.2. **Hard Edges Scotland** report was published in June 2019. This aim of this study was to develop and establish a statistical profile of the extent and nature of severe and multiple disadvantage (SMD) in Scotland. This is a term which is used to signify the problems faced by adults involved in ‘entrenched’ homelessness, chronic substance misuse and the criminal justice system with poverty and/or poor mental health, a common, complicating factor. People faced with SMD have an extraordinarily poor quality of life including sharply heightened risks of both deprivation, social and economic exclusion.
- 7.3. Section 32B of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 inserted by Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 states there is a duty on local authorities to conduct a housing support assessment for applicants who are unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- 7.4. People who become homeless or are threatened with homelessness are provided with short-term housing support either as part of their temporary accommodation (i.e. accommodation with support) or via outreach services provided in furnished temporary accommodation and/or the client’s own home.
- 7.5. Support is provided to equip people with the basic life and social skills and coping mechanisms they will need to sustain their tenancy, engage with other services and move towards living independently. Support is centred on the needs of individual clients and is based on a Personal Support Plan setting out goals, task and timescales.
- 7.6. Support can include: signing up for a tenancy, accessing furniture and equipment, benefit maximisation, budget and debt advice, keeping a clean and tidy home, eating properly, improving relationships with family and neighbours and engaging with specialist services.
- 7.7. Clients have emphasised the need for continued housing support to help them sustain tenancies and to assist in changing behaviours long term (for example debt/money management, life skills and paying bills).
- 7.8. Housing Support services are an important factor in addressing homelessness and assisting people to live as independently as possible in the community.
- 7.9. A partnership approach is vital to ensure the correct support choices are available for individuals. Housing Support providers report an increasing number of homeless households with complex support needs which are out with the scope of Housing Support. These include mental health issues and drug and alcohol addictions. Joint working with other services in the form of a multi-agency triage team will ensure a suitable housing and support pathway is provided for anyone presenting with more complex support needs via the appropriate services.
- 7.10. Table 1 details the number of household referred for housing support under the housing support duty.

Table 4 HL1 Support Needs Identified by Year

<b>Number with an identified support need</b>	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Mental health	352	327	328	383	559
Learning/Physical Disability	106	99	86	116	75
Drug or alcohol Dependency	179	132	146	116	168
Medical condition	91	109	99	145	220

7.11. In developing a vision and plan for rapid rehousing the importance of support services is recognised by all partners and is key to ensuring success in sustaining tenancies either to avoid homelessness altogether or to ensure clients experiencing homelessness can secure and sustain a tenancy in the longer term. Some client's care and/or support needs may be ongoing and long term, dependant on their circumstances. Support and processes for accessing the correct level of support from the appropriate service will be included in the development of a whole system approach to addressing and preventing homelessness.



## THEME 4: SUPPORT

**Theme 4 Outcome:** High quality Support Service at point of need**Actions**

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Action Point 4.1</b> | Review the requirements for housing Support in line with demand and recommission as necessary and ensure appropriate contract management is in place.       |
| <b>Action Point 4.2</b> | Review the provision of housing support for clients moving into permanent accommodation and develop tenancy checks up to 12 months post tenancy start date. |
| <b>Action Point 4.3</b> | Develop a multi-agency triage team to ensure appropriate support is provided for anyone presenting with complex needs.                                      |
| <b>Action Point 4.4</b> | Consider ways of increasing access to Housing Support as part of Homelessness Prevention.   |

## 8. Theme 5 Client Outcomes

- 8.1. Positive Client outcomes are at the heart of the Housing Options and Homeless Service. To reinforce this, service standards have been introduced which provide clear guidance on the level of service that partners and clients can expect. The standards cover clear and transparent decision-making, thorough and quick assessments, providing support and assisting people to find the correct housing solutions.
- 6.14. In 2022/23, 80.33% of assessment decisions were made within 28 days, whilst this is below target (95%) it is significant improvement on the baseline year 2015/16 which was 73.7%. The significant rise in homeless presentations and subsequent resourcing pressures impacted assessment times. As assessments rely on the provision of information from clients it is accepted that a 100% target is likely to be unachievable.
- 8.2. The increase in demand and the external factors affecting performance mean the Service reviewed resourcing requirements and ensure the programme of continuous review and development is actively being pursued. This will involve reviewing all procedures and practices and developing a client journey that has the person at the centre of it. The changing landscape due to both the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis mean it is essential for the service to adopt leaner, cost effective working practices whilst striving to improve the client care and increase the number of positive housing outcomes.
- 8.3. A new Homeless IT System was introduced in 2019 to reduce the level of manual intervention and recording and provide better information to inform service changes and support service delivery. Whilst the system has improved the ability to monitor performance and ensured consistency of recording, it does not fully meet the requirements of the service and is still underpinned by a number of other recording systems and manual operations. The use of IT and other technology will be explored during the period of this strategy to increase the mobility of staff, increase efficiency, and reduce the number of manual and duplicate processes.
- 8.4. The Common Housing Register (CHR) (known as Homes4D&G) assists Homeless clients obtaining permanent social housing. The local CHR consisted of four Registered Social Landlords: Wheatley Homes-South, Cunninghame Housing Association, Home Group (Scotland) and Riverside Group. The CHR have reviewed their allocations policy and launched a ""choice-based"" letting allocation system in May 2023. Partners will actively monitor the allocations to homeless through the new policy to ensure agreed targets are met. Whilst Loreburn HA is not a member of the CHR, they too operate a choice-based letting approach.

Registered Social Landlord	Number of Properties	Planned build over 5 years*
<b>Wheatley Homes - South</b>	10,285	605
<b>Loreburn Housing Association</b>	2430	455
<b>Riverside</b>	393	0
<b>Home Group (Scotland)</b>	568	0
<b>Cunninghame Housing Association</b>	307	694

\*Information as at September 2022 from the Strategic Housing Investment Plan

- 8.5. The percentage of all social and private lets made to statutory homeless households as a proportion of projected new homeless demand for the most recent financial year (22/23) was 63%. A total of 575 lets to statutory homeless were to the social rented sector with 40 to the private rented sector. The RRTP Gap analysis shows a deficit of 129 properties between demand and supply in 22/23.
- 8.6. The % let target to homeless will be agreed as part of a Service Level Agreement with the CHR Board and individually with Loreburn Housing Association. The percentage of allocations from the Common Housing Register and Loreburn Letting over the past 3 years is shown below:

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Common Housing Register	39%	43%	52%
Loreburn Lettings	26%	40%	46%

- 8.7. Over the past 3 years several households requiring larger accommodation units have come through the Housing Options and Homeless Service. These account for a significant portion of Section 5 referrals which are reported as waiting over 1 year for a permanent allocation. This demand for larger properties is highlighted within the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment Review 2022 with a view to ensuring this demand is considered in the future, especially across the west of the region.
- 8.8. To alleviate pressures on the social rented sector we require to develop initiatives which increase the viability of discharging homeless duty into settled accommodation within the Private Rented Sector and increasing the profile of the Rent Deposit Guarantee scheme. The viability and development of a Social Letting Scheme, which was included in Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan but not taken forward due to COVID-19 restrictions and pressures, will now be taken forward within this strategy.
- 8.9. There are a number of clients who are affected by serious vulnerabilities such as mental health issues, drug, and alcohol dependency and those excluded from accessing services multiple times. For some of these clients, a tenancy in mainstream housing is often not the most appropriate solution. The Housing Options and Homeless service works jointly with the Health and Social Care Integrated Joint Board and Adult Supported Accommodation Residential Placement Panel for some clients housing needs. However there remain a number of clients whose needs are not met by the current available housing provision in Dumfries and Galloway. Where independent living (3% of cases identified) within the community is not possible or sustainable for reasons such as safety, risk to self or others, choice, and for whom residential or supported accommodation is the assessed need, this will be small highly specialist provision in a psychologically informed environment (PIE) and commissioned in partnership with the Dumfries and Galloway Health and Social Care Partnership. A PIE environment is one that takes account the psychological makeup – the thinking, emotions, personalities, and past experiences – of its participants in the way that it operates.

**THEME 5: CLIENT OUTCOMES****Theme 5 Outcome:** Ensuring excellence in customer service is at the centre of everything we do**Actions**

- Action Point 5.1** Work in partnership with all RSLs active in the Region to monitor and continually review the allocation percentage to homeless clients reflects service demand.
- Action Point 5.2** Review settled Accommodation Models for clients with particular needs.
- Action Point 5.3** Develop processes to maximise the use of available funding to support positive outcomes for clients. Continue to work closely with Council Services and external partners to maximise the use of discretionary funds.
- Action Point 5.4** Develop Client pathways for employability and skills to improve client outcomes.
- Action Point 5.6** Ensure the needs and demand for permanent accommodation for homeless households is used to develop the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment for Dumfries & Galloway and influences the outcomes from the Local Housing Plan.